

The Ferrophiatic Column *November 1990* Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

Well here it is another month and time to add some extra data to items in last month's column. Jack Knowles has forwarded some data to Dale Wilson's question about the CPR's crossing of Atherley Narrows just east of Orillia, Ontario. Jack writes "I did a casual examination of this area on foot in February 1943. At that time the piles for two other railway bridges north of the present CN swing bridge were clearly visible. Presumably they were for Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern's Orillia spur from Udney. The area has long since been overrun with marina construction. Also, in 1943 there was a disused open platform wooden coach body on the ground at the CN junction at Atherley, but no station building."

Well also, Gord Shaw called to tell me there is a map in the Orillia Opera House that shows a second rail crossing north of the present one. There is no doubt but what there was more than one rail crossing of the Atherley Narrows.

I have now dug out a dusty old piece of a map that adds a little to the puzzle, but first lets look at the history books. The first railway across the narrows was the Toronto, Simcoe & Muskoka Junction Railway when they opened the 2.84 mile section of their railway from Orillia to Atherley on September 15, 1872. This was less than a year after they had opened their line from Barrie into Orillia, which was November 30, 1871. While the first official T,S&MJ train was steaming across the Atherley bridge, another railway the Midland Railway of Canada was no doubt putting the final touches on their bridge and line. The Midland Railway line from Beaverton to Orillia via way of the Atherley Narrows was opened on January 1, 1873.

It was close to 30 years before another railway seen fit to build a bridge across the Atherley Narrows. This was the Georgian Bay and Seaboard Railway that built their line from Port McNicoll via Orillia and Lindsay to the CPR (O&Q) line at Dranoel during the first decade of the 20th century. This Railway was sold to the CPR in 1910.

From digging through my records indications are that the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway line from Udney did not go into Orillia but stopped at Atherley. Records show the 7.34 mile portion from Udney to Atherley opening on July 28, 1910 with 6.88 miles of this line being shown as being disused starting in 1922.

Now back to the bit of map and Jack's observations. My map appears to be from the 1940s. Working backwards, this map do doubt partially explains the disused open platform wooden coach body that Jack spotted at Atherley, since the map shows what I am going to call a full wye junction. The present Newmarket Subdivision comes eastward across the narrows and then makes a curve to the northward. However, the eastward line continues eastward. This is no doubt the old Midland Subdivision heading from Atherley to Lindsay. Then there was a connecting from the Midland Subdivision northwest to join the Newmarket Subdivision. This map shows an abandoned railway paralleling the Midland Subdivision about half-way between it and the next concession road to the north. While not marked, it is no doubt the then recently abandoned CPR line. This map show no sign of the Canadian Northern Ontario Line from Udney that had be gone for some 20 years. Knowing the Mackenzie & Mann philosophy of first building railways on the cheap, plus the terrain of the area covered by my map, this is not surprising. Before we leave the junction, a couple of notes from the GTR 1907 inventory that lists that Atherley Junction on the

Newmarket Subdivision had a storey and half station 15' x 16' with a 10' x 11' wing. The station was built in 1897. A 1890 frame freight house 14' x 20' still existed as did an oil house and two small platforms. On the Midland line only a 1226 square foot platform is shown. Was it a fire or old age that caused the station to be replaced by a rail car?

Jack's comments on the 1943 bridge remains at the narrows and the general history raise a couple of questions that we will throw back to our readers for extra feed back. One set of piles that Jack viewed were no doubt those of the Georgian Bay and Seaboard Railway. However, I am going to make the guess that the other set of abandoned piles and the remaining bridge are those of the Midland Railway of Canada and the Toronto, Simcoe and Muskoka Junction Railway. This raises one additional question since both of these railways became part of CN, who was the owner of the existing bridge?

Jack Knowles carries on with a few more observations about Atherley Narrows, "In August 1980 I observed that the CN swing bridge was then an 'armstrong' operation. Due to the great amount of pleasure boat traffic in summer, the bridge was left open except at train times. When a train was due, two men rowed out in an aluminum skiff to the bridge, climbed up on the deck, inserted a large crank and took turns at the crank to close the bridge. The process was reversed after passage of the train. (This channel is part of the Trent - Severn Waterway)."

Dale Wilson had raised a few questions about the area around the old GTR station in downtown Kingston in last month's Newsletter. Eric Gagnon from Kingston has taken up our challenge and sent along some interesting data to answer some of the questions.

Eric starts out by stating, "The Grand Trunk station, now a restaurant, was operated under the name Hanley Station a couple of years ago. Oddly enough, its sign included an onrushing stylized CPR Selkirk!"

Eric has confirmed the statement in last month's Newletter about the tracks being between the K&P station and the waters of Lake Ontario. Eric writes, "regarding the track layout, in a couple of circa early 1900's photographs from the Queen's University Archives, published in the Kingston Whig-Standard a few years ago, the GTR track curves along the waterfront, right at the water's edge. It passes the CPR (K&P) station area, then continues in a curving line up towards Ontario Street, where it appears to end. Stub tracks at the station must have been few in number, as the area appears to be quite built up with mills, small factories etc. The tracks were indeed probably several feet down from the station building, as the land slopes down to Lake Ontario here." Eric continues, "I have a reproduction of a postcard which shows a circa - 1873 view of a GTR 4-4-0 steam locomotive, 271. It is facing east in front of the Kingston City Hall, passing over a reinforced rock fill, which has water on both sides of it. In the background is the fortified stone Martello Tower, which still stands, unlike the rail line pictured."

This would be in the area of Brock Street just a block east of the K&P station. One undated map probably from the early 1960s that I have, shows tracks curving out to at least the water's edge in this area just west of Brock Street.

Dale had asked questions about the archaeology digs on the north east corner of Wellington & Place D'Armes that were done in 1982 as part of the environmental assessment for the Kingston Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan offices. Well, not

only has Eric sent along some data this is an area from the dig, but also I have a 1927 Property Plan of the area. At this point, Wellington Street is running north & south and in 1927 it extended 450 feet north to Bay Street. Eric writes that apparently the Grand Trunk bought this parcel of land to construct a seven-track freight yard in 1911. My plan does not show dates of purchase, but it does show most of the area east of Wellington Street in this area as being reclaimed from the harbour and that there appears to have 9 tracks west of the main line in 1927. This fan of GTR tracks started from a single lead about 200 feet north of Bay Street. Also this plan like the archaeology dig gives no indication of a GTR turntable in the area. This plan does show a frame roundhouse and turntable for the CPR at the foot of North Street only about 800 feet north of Bay Street. While my plan shows the CN (GTR) and CP (K&P) mainlines as being on adjacent right-of-ways for at least 3 miles north of Bay Street, they do start to separate south of Bay and are approximately 150 feet apart as they go across Place D'Armes with the CP main right at the intersection of Bay and Ontario. Eric speaks of a booklet put out as the result of the dig that indicates that the main line to the downtown Kingston station had first crossed this site in the mid-1870's. This booklet also states that all the tracks were lifted in 1969, after freight operations ceased here.

An aerial photo of the site, taken perhaps in the 1950's, shows a freight shed/office about 50 x 300 feet served by 2 tracks. Adjacent to these tracks are 5 or 6 widely-spaced team tracks. No turntable is visible, however. My plan shows the freight shed with a wagon scale in front of the freight office at the corner of Wellington and Place D'Armes and a freight platform at the north end of the freight shed. The dig did unearth foundation piles and other remains of the freight shed as well as heavy deposits of cinder, spikes and ties. The 1907 GTR Inventory does not make any reference to either a turntable or engine house at Kingston but shows a 2 stall, 4 engine, engine house with a 49'- 8" turntable in it out at the junction with the main line. We would still like to hear more about this interesting railway town. It is interesting to note that CN and CP crossed each other twice south of CN's Mainline on this access into Kingston.

Onto other stations, Rick Mannen dropped a line about the old CPR station at Linwood Junction, the junction for the old CPR line to Listowel (abandoned in the early 1930 as part of the CNR/CPR Act to reduce duplicated trackage). As Rick says the station is only a stone's throw from its original site. The depot which is presently in poor shape is located in the back yard of a farm just on the north side of the former CPR Goderich Subdivision on the east side of Regional Road # 5 just north of downtown Linwood. Rick also mentioned that the former brick CPR station in Listowel that had been used by the town was demolished about 5 years ago.

Speaking of this CPR branch, Rick also points out that this line had the distinction of having the same engineer, one Joseph Fair, handle both the first and last trains ever to run on this line.

A little update (see August 1990 [Newsletter](#)) on the old GTR Station at Aurora, Ontario from Dave Stalford. Dave writes that CN Rail, as part of the formal process required by the National Transportation Agency to permit it to sell its Aurora station to GO Transit is currently publishing a public notice in the local newspapers for four weeks. GO Transit wants to buy this 1900 built station. It is the intention of GO Transit have the station renovated and restored to become part of its station complex in Aurora.

Also from Dave Stalford is another item he refers to as being a "Nice touch." It is a flyer from a Holland Landing Car Care Centre. Dave says he has heard about plenty of free shuttle services to airports and hotels, but to GO Trains! Well, the Bencic Car Care Centre is offering a free shuttle service to and from the GO Trains for their customers. Their hours of service commences about 40 minutes before and ends about 40 minutes after the times of GO Trains # 190 and # 191 at Bradford.

Back in the September column, I carried some information on the speeds for transcontinental trains from Richard Carroll. Well, I guess my computer slipped and got a couple of the "legitimate" best runs of the "SUPER CONTINENTAL" mixed up. To correct them so someone won't be blaming Richard, they should be:

| <u>Timetable</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>Miles</u> | <u>Minutes</u> | <u>Average</u> |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Oct. 1966 | Allan | Watrous | 29.8 | 25 | 71.5 |
| Apr. 1972 | Wainwright | Viking | 44.5 | 38 | 70.3 |

With the above Richard also mentioned another item relating to train speeds. On September 4, 1990, the ONR "NORTHLANDER" assumed a new schedule, occasioned by the opening of the new North Bay station. The new routing followed through that city saves about 2 miles and 10 minutes between North Bay and Temagami, and on an overall basis, the new times of 5 hours even (both ways) between Cochrane and North Bay and 9 hours 45 minutes (southbound) between Cochrane and Toronto are the best ever between those points.

A couple of times recently including the July column, we have spoke of storing old rail equipment. Well Jack Knowles has sent along a few comments about another location, this time here in Toronto. "Further on the subject of CPR dead storage of cars in the 1930s depression, another location was a small yard on the southeast corner of Bloor and Dundas Streets in West Toronto, previously used as team tracks and today (1990) the site of a high school. This yard contained about two dozen of the lower numbered 4600 series wooden fruit express cars with low arch roofs, which no longer carried the large sheet steel roof ventilators for which the cars were noted. Also in the yard were a number of 3800 series regular wooden express cars, including one open platform car, 3829. All of the foregoing cars had sheet metal nailed over the windows and had been repainted with red boxcar paint and lettered in white before being stored. Thus it appears that CPR gathered the cars by classes rather than in random collections of Bad Order cars, and made a real effort to protect cars deemed fit for further service."